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| Institution: Gray's School of Art, Robert Gordon University |
| Unit of Assessment: 32 |
| <p>1. Unit context and structure, research and impact strategy</p> <p>Gray's School of Art at Robert Gordon University was established in 1885 and its overarching mission focuses on the potential of the artist and designer to contribute to society through thought leadership, and practical outcomes based on material outputs, exhibitions, and written material. The ethos of Gray's research is grounded in the established traditions of Art and Design practice and theory in the North-East of Scotland. Our work is underpinned by an awareness of our impact on our environment and on the sustainability of our practices, critically important as our city and region begin to feel its way towards a post-oil future. The persistence of extractive models of economic development in our region based on agriculture, fishing, oil and gas, means that the North-East of Scotland does not conform to dominant models of cultural development in the context of post-industrial urban and metropolitan regeneration.</p> <p>In 2015-16, in response to this complex local and national picture, the University decided to re-focus its approach in terms of its research strategy, and that this current REF period would be one of re-building, with the aim of establishing a more vibrant interdisciplinary research culture, and developing emerging research strategies and impacts. With this in mind, research at Gray's has been re-focused and transformed fundamentally since the last REF exercise in 2014. Only one staff member submitted in 2014 has been re-submitted this time, and our focus has been on a smaller group of staff who are engaged consistently in high quality and impactful research.</p> <p>In terms of research management, Blackwood was appointed as Research Lead in May 2018 to begin to shape these changes within the School. This has resulted in a leaner research group and a more focused submission for REF2021, based around a much different group of researchers working on parallel, but overlapping, territories of interest. Only three members of staff in this research group were employed at Gray's before 2014, with three having joined since the beginning of 2019.</p> <p>This re-structuring of the research team was built around five key personnel returned for REF (4.2FTE), all of whose practice relates clearly to one or more research strengths of the School. Research management is also leaner with the Research Lead responsible for the School's research strategy and policy, and representing the School on the University Research Committee and, as Research Degrees Co-Ordinator, on the Postgraduate Research Degrees Committee.</p> <p>In terms of the School's research and impact strategy, the focus is on four thematic areas:</p> <p>Cultural Ecologies & Environment (Blackwood, Clarke, Fremantle, Hackett) seeks to understand the interactions of creative, economic and political actors within society and the way that these interactions shape and are shaped by the work of artists and designers; the ways that the sum of these actions impact on our environment and issues of sustainability.</p> <p>Curatorship (Blackwood, Clarke, Fremantle, Winter) Gray's has developed significant expertise nationally and internationally in curatorship in the last REF period, with staff delivering shows in Scotland, England, Portugal, Croatia, North Macedonia, and Montenegro. Staff have</p> |

also intervened significantly in developing discussion around the relationship between anthropology and curation, and in the emerging field of digital curation.

Design-Led Business Support (Nicoll, **Steed**) Gray's has developed two significant Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) applied research partnerships since 2017 and hosts Look Again Festival of Visual Art & Design, which has mentored and supported small businesses and individual creatives locally and nationally as part of its broad spectrum of cultural work. **Steed's** work on Augmented Fashion and Smart Textiles has grown exponentially during this period and is set to become a key priority in the next REF period. **Steed** has worked with colleagues in the School of Computing and the School of Creative and Cultural Business at RGU, with a new partnership with Donghua University in China being an important marker of this interdisciplinary research.

Artist as Maker (Blyth, **Guild**, Macintosh, Gilmour, Chalmers) We have makers of national and international calibre in our research staff. Gray's has pioneered methodologies of practice-led, creative research over two decades. For example, **Guild** has exhibited internationally on a wide range of subjects in his painting, from the Anthropocene and climate change to philosophical enquiries into the nature and perception of material and objects; the relationship between two and three dimensions. Blyth has developed a partnership with Fermynwoods Contemporary in East Northamptonshire; intervening in a number of socially engaged and inclusive projects through contemporary art practice with socially excluded and vulnerable young adults. (<http://fermywoods.org/scotland-to-corby/>)

Within each of these areas the aims have been to (i) increase grant income substantially (ii) increase the number of high quality research outputs (iii) build on existing cross-school, external and international collaborations (iv) re-build a community of research degree students in strategic collaboration with the Graduate School and the Research Training Co-Ordinator, Paula Sledzinska; and (v) grow a broad and multi-faceted research culture that provides both stimulus and support for existing researchers, and is welcoming to new colleagues and students alike.

In addition, Gray's researchers are committed to delivering research of the highest integrity and adhering strictly to best-practice ethical standards. Research proposals are subject to robust internal peer review and, more widely, if appropriate, the university research committee. A section on the school's research committee agendas is devoted to any ethical matters that may have arisen from colleagues' research. It should be said that no research proposal submitted in the reporting period required significant ethical oversight, but the mechanisms are there- at both school and university level- as they are required.

The work of **Steed**, working on AHRC-funded research alongside colleagues in the schools of Computing, and Creative and Culture Business, exemplifies the School's renewed broader interdisciplinary perspective. **Fremantle's** work with Art & Health, and with Wetlands research as part of the Ramsar network, **Blackwood's** research into cultural ecologies, the intersections of contemporary activism, politics and art, and McIntosh's designed jewellery yoking together elements of sound and the landscape, are further examples of this refreshed focus.

In terms of impact and engagement, research makes a significant contribution to teaching at Gray's at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels, marking significant added value to our classroom offer. Our staff disseminate their work nationally and internationally through invited public lectures. Our public-facing programme, *Guest at Gray's*, sees very high-profile professionals from across the creative disciplines come to address our undergraduates, postgraduates and staff community both in

terms of research and practice. Recent visiting lecturers on this programme have included Charles Esche (Director, van Abbe Museum, Eindhoven), artists Martin Creed, Jacqueline Donachie, Beverley Hood, Jade Montserrat, and the White Pube.

Gray's also has significant strengths in research and commercialisation, and design-led business support. Since 2019, the Look Again Festival of Visual Art and Design (established in 2015), has been an integral part of the School and is a key conduit of ideas for the city and region's creative community, in terms of exhibition making, small business mentorship and support, and the development of new opportunities for creatives in the early stages of their career (Nicoll). In practical terms, the development of Look Again from 2015, from being an on-campus festival to a city-wide weekender festival attracting thousands of visitors to the city, is a key marker of Gray's engagement with the cultural ecology of Aberdeen.

In addition, Gray's has grown its experience in KTP activities (**Steed**), with one successful collaboration with Montrose Rope and Sail having just finished, and another to begin on the Isle of Lewis, fostering excellence in interdisciplinary research and knowledge exchange.

We will continue to make progress on fostering an open research culture. We have taken significant steps forward towards this since 2014. All staff research is now available openly on our university worktribe via individual researcher profiles, and is available, subject to publisher's restrictions, to any member of the public. Staff also share finished outputs and research in progress via platforms such as researchgate and academia.edu, and via individual professional profile sites (see for example jonblackwood.net and chris.fremantle.org). Our annual research conference is open to any member of the public who wishes to attend and is advertised widely in local print and digital media. Colleagues are committed, as appropriate, to sharing research data with others scholars and students wherever ethically possible. **Blackwood's** raw data files from field interviews conducted with artist and cultural workers in Macedonia as part of his Carnegie Trust-funded research project, in the summer of 2015, are available on request for those who wish to hear them. Colleagues have responded actively throughout the period to the rapidly changing contours of open access publication and research.

Looking forward, Gray's intends to develop steadily and to grow capacity around the key research priorities of cultural ecologies and environment, curatorship, design-led business support, and art making. With the new structures for the management and development of research now settled down, staff are beginning to meet the University's priorities of interdisciplinarity and international partnership (**Steed, Blackwood, Fremantle**). Discussions are ongoing with regard to developing and extending Gray's virtual exhibition offer following the successful delivery of the virtual degree show in June 2020 (Nicoll) with commercial partners Design & Code in Aberdeen (**Blackwood, Nicoll**). It is intended that future PhD studentships will be offered in the strategically important areas of curating and augmented fashion / textiles. Through our support to our early career researchers (ECR) and the offer of a research sabbatical for those whose research agenda requires a period away from teaching responsibilities, we intend to grow the capacity and reach of our research and research ambitions through to 2026/27.

In the next cycle of research activity, we intend to establish ourselves as a centre of excellence for curatorial activity, and to build upon the growing momentum around augmented fashion, with internal discussions ongoing around the creation of an Augmented Fashion Lab under **Steed's** leadership. In supporting the development of these key areas, we will also continue to grow the level of our research grant applications and income (£2.4 million worth of bids across 31 different application have been submitted since 2018, with £499,500 of funding currently active) and through targeted studentships re-build the postgraduate community, in collaboration with our Graduate School. In

focusing on areas that reflect our current capacity and working intensively on them, we intend to grow Gray's research significantly in terms of staff, income and outputs in the years ahead.

2. People

Staffing strategy & staff development

The developments described above, since May 2018, have seen a re-structuring of research at Gray's. The creation of the post of Research Lead re-established research on the Senior Management Team of the School and provides a direct link between the Head of School and wider RGU management, and research staff, leading to an easy and transparent sharing of key information. The Research Lead chairs the Gray's Research Committee which normally meets four times per annum, as well as sitting on the University research committee, which meets three times per annum.

Staff research activities are now managed directly by **Blackwood** who reports to the Head of School, and liaises with the Vice Principal for Research, for Gray's research activities. The focus since 2018 has been to ensure the maximisation of research time for staff through a programme of informal lunchtime activities and networking, both within the School (Gray's Research Lunches) and across the University (Research Leads Networking; Gray's Research conference in 2018 and 2019). All research staff now have individual set targets for raising research income and for the production of outputs, considering career stage and capacity for future growth.

In addition to having workloads defined clearly, staff are encouraged to grow and develop through an ongoing series of twice termly meetings on research development (before COVID; this is presently once termly during the pandemic period). These individual meetings between the Research Lead and staff allow management to better understand staff plans and aspirations and to factor these in appropriately with their line manager in the twice-yearly Employee Performance Review. Whereas in REF 2014 research leadership was devolved to three professorial staff members, research is now led by a Reader, with the management and discussion of research being less hierarchical than has been the case in the past.

The Research Lead is supported in the delivery of research activities by two senior researchers (**Steed, Fremantle**) who provide a critical sounding board as well as mentorship and support for less experienced researchers. Gray's currently has three ECRs, who are supported by the newly established University Early Career Research Network. Under the aegis of Paula Sledzinska, Research Training Co-Ordinator based at the University's Research Strategy & Policy Department and the Graduate School, the ECRN runs a lively programme of specialist workshops, opportunities to present research, and mentorships, as well as clear pathways to developing the pillars of an early academic's career in grant writing, presentation of research, workload management and career progression. Staff with access to the ECRN programme benefit from a range of invited speakers as well as individual advice and mentorship.

Since May 2018, research has been key in the appointment of new academic staff. With research now managed directly by the School, staff recruitment has research track record or clear future research potential as a key requirement of all academic appointments, with membership of the research group granted automatically to all new staff. This has already yielded dividends in attracting researchers of the calibre of **Guild** (January 2019) and **Winter** (July 2019). This is key to the building of research critical mass within the School which had

been challenging following the retirement of Douglas and the moving on of other senior colleagues in the period 2014-17.

All new staff are subject to a probation period of twelve months in line with the University's HR policies. Staff who have either received external funding, or who require a period of focused research away from the campus, are entitled to apply for a research sabbatical. The sabbatical, lasting for one semester, allows the member of staff to complete a programme of work agreed by a group comprising of the University Vice Principal for Research, the Head of Gray's School of Art, and the Research Lead, who is the first formal point of support and monitoring during the sabbatical itself.

Staff have 20% of their contracted hours allocated to research, with the exception of three senior staff members who have between 35% to 80% allocated for research funding and management duties. Staff are supported through an active programme of research lunches, where developments can be shared informally, and termly research strategy days, where developments on our strategy can be shared and discussed, and where advice sessions led by our colleagues from the RGU Research Strategy & Policy Department ensure that our research staff are kept up to date on procedures for impact, grant writing, time and record management, shaping and developing research questions and resultant programmes of work.

The annual research conference, open to the public, has been a critical support to the development of our younger researchers and in building their self-confidence in presenting their research to varied audiences, since the inaugural conference on Space & Spatiality in October 2018, and the subsequent event "Creativity and the Periphery", in 2019. These events have enabled Gray's staff to present their latest research findings alongside visiting speakers such as Dr. Stephen Pritchard, and the curatorial duo Mother Tongue (Tiffany Boyle and Jessica Carden). Both events have been attended by over 100 people, with our research profile in the city and region grown significantly as a result. Internally, this is an important research-driven link between undergraduate and postgraduate students, and staff.

[\(https://www.eveningexpress.co.uk/fp/news/local/aberdeen-university-to-hold-art-conference/\)](https://www.eveningexpress.co.uk/fp/news/local/aberdeen-university-to-hold-art-conference/)

Research students

Gray's collaborates closely with the University Graduate School in managing PhDs, having been a sectoral leader in practice-led research since the 1990s. The development and maintenance of our PhD community is a central node in the School's long-term research strategy, providing a vital link between theory and practice. The track record of our PhD students subsequent to completion is a source of pride for us.

In the last REF period, seven PhD students, from a total of nine enrolled, completed their theses with consistently high results. Melehat Gulari, **who** completed her PhD in 2014, collaborated with **Fremantle** on AHRC funded Design in Action KE Hub 2012-16, bringing knowledge of Small to Medium Businesses and creating a SME network for Design in Action; and developed a UK/Turkish international network of researchers and SMEs through Researcher Links/Newton Fund in 2016 (£38k). Paul Thompson completed a doctorate in 2014 considering the impact of digital processes and networked participation on post-physical printmaking practice; he is now a part time lecturer at Edinburgh Napier University. Peter Buwert completed 2016 in Ethical Design: a Foundation for Visual Communication, and is now a lecturer at Edinburgh Napier University. Helen Smith completed in 2015, on an AHRC funded Collaborative Doctoral Award with the Barn, Banchory, and now lectures on the Masters in Cultural Policy at Newcastle

University. Jonathan Price completed 2016 on the “Artist as Leader” and is now a lecturer in Creativity and Enterprise at Leeds University. Caroline Gausden completed 2016 and is working as a postdoctoral researcher between the University of St Andrews and Glasgow Women's Library. Maja Zećo completed a PhD by practice in sound art and performance in 2019, and is a full-time artist about to embark on a publicly funded three month residency at Aberdeen Art Gallery and Museum. Zećo's work was fully funded by a Scottish Graduate School for the Arts & Humanities Collaborative Doctoral Award. Unfortunately, two of our research students did not complete their programme of study; *redacted 1* did not submit within the required time and was de-registered in 2019; *redacted 2* failed at viva stage in 2019. *Redacted 1* is now a working artist, whilst *redacted 2* has enrolled on a new course in a separate discipline, abroad. Notwithstanding these last two cases, taken in the round, this is a record of considerable achievement for our PhD students in an extremely competitive marketplace.

Equality & Diversity

RGU is an Equal Opportunities employer and this is embedded in all our HR policies and processes (<https://www.rgu.ac.uk/about/governance/equality-diversity/equality-diversity-policy>). We have a number of family friendly policies which include generous maternity pay and leave above the statutory provision. RGU has a flexible working policy that allows staff once they have enough service to apply for flexible working regardless of their personal circumstance.

Five of eleven active researchers have been included in the REF exercise for 2021. The group comprises 11 staff (FTE 8.9) of which five are men (3.7FTE, 45%) and six women (5.2FTE, 55%). This compares favourably with the composition of the school's academic staff; of 34 academic staff members, 22 (65%) are men and 12 (35%) are women. Of a total staff of 62 at Gray's (academic, support and technical staff) 33 (53%) are men and 29 (47%) are women.

Of the research group of eleven, three are early career researchers, six are established researchers, with two senior researchers. Gray's is committed to building and extending leadership capability across the organisation and our research group is no exception. In the next REF cycle there will be a focus on building research leadership capacity amongst our eight established or senior researchers, and to further encourage the use of our sabbatical policy.

At all levels of our work Gray's is committed to redressing the gender imbalance in our academic staff. Two of our last three academic appointments since January 2019 have been women, and we will continue to make progress on this journey in the next REF cycle, in the broader context of the university's work towards an Athena Swan award.

3. Income, infrastructure and facilities

The funding data evidences a good range of activity across the School. This includes **research income** through AHRC research awards, charitable trust awards, and KTP awards in the reporting period. This is part of our established aim to grow research income and consultancy year on year, with £499,500 of active research grant money currently in play, and granted during the REF assessment period.

Our research work at Gray's is supported closely by colleagues at the Research Strategy & Policy Department, with a team offering support on grant administration and opportunities, dialogue on research policy and strategy, equality & diversity and data protection, and focused work on grant writing and career development through one to one mentorship and workshops. RGU introduced a "Research Week" in June of every year in session 2018/19 which encourages collaboration and the sharing of best practice, across the University's schools and disciplines, and an annual internally distributed research magazine available to all staff.

Individual research staff are tasked annually with applying for a level of funding dependent on the stage of their research career. Early career research staff are expected to apply for a minimum of £5,000 annually; established mid-career staff, a minimum of £25,000 annually; staff with significant research experience or responsibility are expected to apply for £50,000 and upward, annually. Targeted support for individual researchers is offered through individual mentoring at Gray's and through practical support from colleagues in the University's Research Strategy and Policy office. A monthly conversation between the Research Lead and the Research Development Co-Ordinator, Carolina Kenny (based in the strategy and policy office) ensures that staff are kept appraised of trends in funded research and how these map onto the School's defined research priorities, in order to maintain an ongoing inventory of funding opportunities and ideas for colleagues at Gray's.

In keeping with developments across the sector, the management of research data has undergone remarkable change since the last REF exercise. Worktribe has been rolled out and updated continuously since 2018, managed and supported by the Research Asset Management staff, and is now an established part of our research data gathering internally, and a platform for the presentation of our research activities publicly.

In respect of Design-Led Business support, **Steed** is leading for Gray's on the AHRC-funded interdisciplinary project *Augmented Fashion: Immersive Interactions For Sustainable Heritage In Fashion And Textiles*, worth £406,312.11 and beginning in February 2020; outputs and impacts will underpin the first part of the next REF cycle. The AHRC also funded *Augmented to Authentic, Weaving the Past into the Future*, worth £22,518.00, in 2019.

Steed has also led Gray's activity on Knowledge Transfer Partnerships, in which the School has developed significant expertise. Between February 2018 and February 2020, the Innovate UK project, in partnership with Montrose Rope & Sail, saw the development, manufacture and brand of a new range of products within the luxury high-end fashion accessories market. This saw jobs created within the business, and the grant was valued at £139,428.00. In delivering this project, **Steed** also developed new work with Innovate UK and Harris Tweed brand Hebrides, which will bring £163,249 to the School in the next reporting period.

Further on this theme of design-led business support, **Fremantle** was the RGU lead in the consortium of six Scottish universities that formed part of the AHRC-funded *Design in Action* grouping. In the period 2012/16, **Fremantle** developed work around the theme of Knowledge

Exchange Hubs for the Creative Economy, in a grant valued at £487,078. Following on from this work **Fremantle** has built considerably in the territories covered by *Design in Action*; £38,000 from the British Council for the project *Designpreneurship* delivered with Gulari in 2017; an AHRC research grant valued at £3,059 to write the report *Issues Facing Arts & Health Practitioners* completed in 2019; and a further £2,500 for mentorship of Nicola Naismith on the AHRC Clore Leadership programme (<https://www.cloreleadership.org/network/clore-fellows/15904>). **Fremantle** has supervised Naismith's work continuously during this period.

In the area of Design-Led Business Support, Sutherland worked on a project funded by Lord's Taverners to re-design a table cricket set in the period 2018-20, funded by the Taverners at a total value of £50,000. Sutherland's applied research practice focuses in particular on the circular economy and the recycling of plastics. In this sense, he has started a small enterprise (<https://originthat.com/>) focused on setting up recycling hubs, that will transform plastic waste into a useful end product in front of visitors' eyes. Established internally with £10k. from the Robert Gordon University Accelerator fund, this fledgling business has since attracted £15k from Zero Waste Scotland for a Plastics Audit, and £7k from the European Innovation Fund to establish a dedicated hub within campus and to provide tooling for the work.

Nicoll's work as co-director of the Look Again festival has seen a range of focused activity on design-led business support, and growth and development of the cultural infrastructure in Aberdeen and the wider North-East region. Since 2018, Nicoll has raised £139,000 from Creative Scotland and from the Scottish Funding Council; examples of this impactful and innovative programme have included *Cultivate: Developing the Creative Industries in the North East* (funded by a Creative Scotland grant of £19,200); *Cultivate and Activate* (a continuation of the previous programme, lasting from September 2018-September 2020, funded by Creative Scotland and Aberdeen City Council to the value of £45,000), and the *Create : Networks Programme to extend Look Again Business Support to North Aberdeenshire, Orkney & Shetland*, funded by a £30,000 Creative Scotland grant. The clear synergies between Nicoll's activities in Design-led Business support and our strategic research focus on Curatorship are being actively pursued and developed as we move into the next REF cycle.

Hackett's work on artistic methods and the socially excluded was funded as part of a joint bid with colleagues at the University of Edinburgh; he was awarded £4,828 as part of an ESRC-funded research project into Care Leavers' Relationships with mental health and social media.

In the strategic area of curatorship, **Blackwood** was awarded £3,500 from the Carnegie Trust for the Universities in Scotland for the project *Contemporary Macedonian Artists talking* in 2014/15, which subsequently resulted in the first book published wholly funded by this scheme. **Blackwood** has also benefitted from nearly £30,000 of internally awarded GCRF funding for research into the cultural ecology of North Macedonia.

The development of a strong research centre in Curatorship is further enhanced by the University holdings. We have an extensive collection of artefacts (paintings, drawings, sculpture, design and craft objects including ceramics, digital work, fashion garments and photographs dating back to the 19th Century). The Art and Heritage Collections were awarded Full Museum Accreditation by Museums Libraries and Archives Council in February 2009 and work is procured on an annual basis. The University is participating in the Public Catalogue Foundation's (PCF and BBC) 'Your Paintings' online catalogue and database, and has more than 850 paintings from the collection included in the initiative. In addition, RGU library service subscribes to over 85 online databases, including Art Full Text, Business Source Premier, Design and Applied Arts Index and Web of Knowledge and image databases that contain copyright cleared images for educational use: Art Museum Image Gallery and Bridgeman

Education, Scottish Cultural Resource Access Network (SCRAN). The University is an associate member of the Scottish Graduate School for the Arts and Humanities, and a full member of the Council for Higher Education in Art & Design (CHEAD).

4. Collaboration and contribution to the research base, economy and society

Our contributions to the research base, economy and society are orientated clearly around the four areas of strategic importance to the School: **Curatorship, Design-Led Business Support, Cultural Ecologies & the Environment**, and the **Artist as Maker**. Colleagues are involved in collaborative projects awarded competitively by major research councils and we have a well-established network of collaborations locally, nationally, and internationally.

The supple management of research at Gray's, taken together with commercialisation activities, has enabled the School to meet the challenge set by the University of fostering interdisciplinary partnerships within and beyond the University. Key partnerships with organisations such as Aberdeen Art Gallery and Museum, re-opened in autumn 2019, Peacock Visual Arts, the Scottish Sculpture Workshop (Lumsden), Deveron Projects (Huntly), Timespan (Helmsdale), the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, and Summerhall (Edinburgh) demonstrate an embedded network of relationships within wider local, regional and national cultural ecologies

Steed's KTP work (Montrose Rope and Sail, February 2018-2020) saw the School collaborate with an external company to create a new range of products aimed at the luxury high end fashion market. This trajectory is continuing beyond the REF period with a new KTP project working with Harris Tweed Hebrides, in focusing on sustainable business demand for the Outer Hebrides Textile industry. Steed's KTP work builds on previous experience of these projects within the School and across the University, in collaboration with the Entrepreneurship & Innovation Group. These are projects with ramifications locally, nationally and internationally, and will underpin the University's ambitions to develop the research area of Augmented Fashion & Textiles.

Steed has begun to work on the project Augmented Fashion: Immersive Interactions For Sustainable Heritage In Fashion And Textiles (from 1 Feb 2020) with colleagues from RGU's School of Computing, the School for Creative and Cultural Business, and Donghua University, China. This is an interdisciplinary, international partnership of critical importance to the School.

Locally, **Steed** and Nicoll led on the national conference on Aberdeenshire fashion designer Bill Gibb, and his legacy. Featuring scholars and academics from around the UK, this was due to be held at Aberdeen Art Gallery and Museum, over two days, in March 2020. As a result of the pandemic, this took place on 20 March 2021 (<https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/AAGM/whats-aberdeen-art-galleries-and-museums/fashion-fantasy-and-collaboration-legacy-bill-gibb>).

Research-active staff continue to have significant profiles as makers of art and as designers, which is the longest running strategic theme at Gray's. McIntosh's practice as an interdisciplinary jewellery designer was showcased in the *Collect* exhibition organised by the Crafts Council at Somerset House, in February-March 2020. Her work responds to a sense of place through sound. Guild maintains an international exhibiting practice (Scottish Gallery, Edinburgh, 2019) as

a painter and collaborated with Gray's staff in 2017 as part of an exhibition at Summerhall, Edinburgh (Blyth, **Guild**). As Early Career Researchers, Gilmour and Chalmers both had early showings of their work at the Look Again space in Aberdeen (2019/20).

Academics have further given invited lectures at the National Gallery of Scotland in Edinburgh (**Blackwood** 2014-16, four occasions); the European Centre for Advanced Studies (**Steed**), Aberdeen Art Gallery and Museums (**Steed; Blackwood; Nicoll**); Peacock Visual Arts (**Blackwood, Clarke**) Politecnico di Milano, Chelsea College of the Arts (**Steed**), Sheffield University, EASA (European Association for Social Anthropology), CCA Glasgow, (Clarke). Gray's researchers have participated in conferences nationally and internationally, including the Association of Art Historians (**Blackwood**, 2017). Clarke devised *The Skin and Body Lab* for EASA Conference, University of Stockholm, with Dr. Claire Vionnet, University of Bern, Switzerland. And the RAI Conference Art Materiality and Representation, the British Museum and SOAS, London

Fremantle also led for RGU in its role as a consortium partner in Design in Action (DiA) (2012 – 2016), an AHRC funded Design-led Support Programme (DSP) and Knowledge Exchange (KE) Hub across six institutions. RGU's role as consortium partner was to demonstrate economic impacts, foster international collaborations and to find new ways of evaluating impact, in partnership with 'Design in Action' (DiA).

The RGU consortium focussed on H2020 and the food sector. Initially, the consortium held meetings in order to consolidate them into H2020 funded bids. An application around was progressed with the Newton Fund, together with our Turkish colleague Professor Özlem Er. The specific call that the RGU - DiA Hub proposal responded to was the Research Links: Workshop Call, which covered a number of challenges including: Food and Nutrition and Food Security.

The research focused on how design can contribute to innovation for business. RGU had previously led the European Union funded Centre for Design and Innovation and supported doctoral research on DSPs (Gulari 2013). As a result of our participation in the Design in Action KE Hub, RGU researchers and academics have developed new business models supporting creative entrepreneurs, businesses and SMEs with design-led innovation KE methodologies through an extensive programme of creative industry developments to support creative enterprises.

An example was the support offered in the founding of Beer52, a craft beer subscription service founded in September 2013. As of now, the business employs eleven full time staff, engages four further freelancers, and is a company now valued at four million pounds, with an annual turnover of £2.6 million. The legacy of **Fremantle's** work with colleagues has been a consistent focus on Design-Led Business Support throughout the last REF period.

Fremantle is continuing to work with Professor *Emeritus* Douglas on research into art and ecology with particular reference to the Center for Force Majeure Studies at UC Santa Cruz, USA. Douglas and **Fremantle's** rigorous collaborative research practice has seen in recent years outputs on the work of Newton and the late Helen Mayer Harrison, published by international publishers (New York : Prestel and London: Routledge), work which has resonance locally for our students through the programme of work at the Barn, Banchory.

Newton and Helen Mayer Harrison were pioneering land and ecological artists whose work from the late 1960s onwards has asked profound questions on the relationship of the artist to their

environment and awareness of the role that the artist can play in our society. These are trends that are particularly resonant in our own time of climate emergency, and it underpins their public programme of work, *On the Deep Wealth of this Nation : Scotland*. This is a programme supported by the James Hutton Institute, Aberdeen, and the Scottish Environment, Food and Agricultural Research Institutes (SEFARI, funded by the Scottish government).

<https://www.thebarnarts.co.uk/artist/newton-harrison>

Fremantle is also an independent arts producer responsible for projects such as [Nil by Mouth: Food, Farming, Science and Sustainability](#), as well as producing the [ecoartscotland](#) programme and blog. As a curator, he delivered the exhibition *Reclaiming Wetland Values: Marsh, Mud and Wonder* at the Royal Geographical Society in London (January/February 2020), part of World Wetlands day on 2 February 2020. This exhibition is one of the reflections of our strategic interest in art & the environment, with the issue of food security linking Fremantle's research work into contemporary art practices (the Harrisons), the Knowledge Exchange Hub and ongoing research into Art & Health. **Fremantle** helped to establish the Arts, Culture Health & Wellbeing Scotland network as a response to the Scottish Government's Cultural Policy.

Winter has developed significant work in the area of curatorship since joining the University in 2019. She acted as guest curator of the exhibition *Edward Allington: Things Unsaid* at the Henry Moore Centre in Leeds from October 2019 to January 2020, based on personal knowledge of the artist as well as art historical and curatorial research (<https://www.henry-moore.org/press-office/press-release/2019/07/09/edward-allington-things-unsaid#>). On the basis of this work,

Winter produced a biography of Allington for the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography.

Winter's work with Professor Emeritus Tim Ingold and Roger Sansi on *The Anthropologist as Curator* holds the very discourse of curatorship up to sustained critical analysis and seems set to become a significant research direction in the next REF period.

Blackwood has shaped an impactful body of curatorial work, focused mainly on the territory of the Western Balkans and in particular North Macedonia, Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia. In the last REF period he curated exhibitions internationally in Montenegro, Croatia, Macedonia as well as in Scotland.(see, for example, <https://www.summerhall.co.uk/visual-arts/captured-state/>) **Blackwood** curated a total of seven exhibitions in the period including the first ever show of video art from North Macedonia in Aberdeen, the first showing in Scotland of Venice 2013 artist Mladen Miljanović (Peacock Visual Arts- see <https://worm.gallery/showing/utopian-realism>), and also edited significant texts on Bosnian contemporary art funded by the leading commercial gallery duplex 100m2 in Sarajevo and by agnès b. in Paris.

Blackwood's book *Critical Art in Contemporary Macedonia* published in Skopje in 2016 was funded by a Research Incentive Grant of £3,500 from the Carnegie Trust for the Universities in Scotland. **Blackwood** had a major exhibition of contemporary Bosnian art entitled *Suspended Animation*, featuring a publication and show of seven selected artists, in development, but this was affected by COVID. Originally planned to run for the Edinburgh International Festival, at Summerhall, from July – October 2020, it has now been postponed for delivery in 2022. A broader interdisciplinary trajectory has emerged from this body of work based on participatory observation, and in particular on art, activism and post-socialist transformation both in the former Yugoslavia and in the countries of the former USSR, particularly Belarus.

Anthropological approaches to contemporary art and design, with a particular focus on the curatorial and the anthropological, have strengthened in Gray's in the last REF period. Clarke's

appointment in 2016 has seen the development of a significant European art-anthropology network, the EASA (European Association of Social Anthropology), for which she will act as co-convenor during the period 2020-22 (<https://easaonline.org/networks/antart/>). Important activity has included an international exhibition backed in July 2020 by 3,000 euros exhibition funding, supported with matched in-kind funding by collaborator Faculdade de Belas-Artes da Universidade de Lisboa (Faculty of Fine Art, University of Lisbon), for 'Fieldwork/s exhibition', a show for which she acted as Co-Curator. Clarke is also a Group member & supported by ESRC Funded Network: The political Ecology of Coastal Societies, Aberdeen and Tohoku Universities, led by Prof. David Anderson.

Our researchers also continue to develop and extend our international research networks. Gray's now has established partnerships with Donghua University (China), the Universities of Sarajevo and Banja Luka (Bosnia-Herzegovina) and Belgrade & Niš (Serbia); the Gallery of Contemporary Art and the Museum of the City of Skopje in North Macedonia; the Institute of Contemporary Art in Zagreb, Croatia; the Centre for Force Majeure Studies, University of Santa Cruz. Staff have further completed research outputs and established or built upon networks in Belarus, Canada, Estonia, Germany, Portugal and Russia during the last REF period.

Professional Memberships & National Collaborations:

Blackwood sits on the executive of the Scottish Graduate School for Arts and Humanities (SGSAH) and has been a full member of the IKT (International Association of Curators of Contemporary Art) since summer 2018. He is also a member of the Association of Art Historians.

Fremantle acts as the chair of the arts focus group of the Ramsar Cultural Network, a project of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands funded by Mava Foundation (Switzerland), which has continued to function effectively since the end of funding. **Fremantle** helped to establish the Arts, Culture Health & Wellbeing Scotland network supported as part the Scottish Government's Cultural Policy. He sits on the Board of Ayr Gaiety Partnership. He has also served on the Board of the South Ayrshire Arts Partnership. He served on the Executive of the Scottish Artists Union for ten years, and is a Fellow of the RSA.

Steed is a Steering Group Member (Knowledge Exchange expert) in The Association of Fashion & Textile Courses (FTC). The subject association promotes and develops fashion and textiles through academic debate, education and research since 2018. She is also a Member of The Textile Institute and peer reviewer for The Textile Institute Journal. She is also a steering member of the Immersive Scotland knowledge exchange consortium.

Clarke has served as Chair of the Board of Trustees at SSW in Lumsden since September 2019 (<http://www.ssw.org.uk/about/>). She is a fellow of the Royal Anthropological Institute in London and holds memberships of the European Association of Social Anthropology and the Association of Social Anthropology. She has also acted as an invited reviewer for AHRC UK since 2019.

Guild is a full member of the Royal Scottish Academy.

Nicoll is Chair of the Arts & Enterprise Committee at WASPS Studios (2016-present) and sat on the board of Hospitalfield, Arbroath (2012-19).

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